

A remarkable friendship: Edgerton/Mark Scarborough

By Janice Redford
Special to the Edgerton Reporter

This is the story of two friends who shared a fascination for so many of the same things: Civil War History, politics, parrots, people with talent, and Edgerton.

Donna Browne (formally named Donegal) and Mark Scarborough met while taking an acting class with famed professor Dr. Fanny Hicklin at UW-Whitewater nearly three decades ago. Donna was organized and focused and Mark was not, but they became Bosom Buddies anyway. They shared a love for the stage and acted together in shows such as *Guys and Dolls* over a period of years. Their friendship blossomed and Donna thought of him as the brother she never had. Mark shared his life's stories with ups and downs and various girlfriends plus their mutual addiction for similar authors such as Mark Twain. Mostly they shared the ability to laugh and enjoy being together.

College graduation brought their lives into very separate places and intensive careers that kept them too busy to stay in touch. Mark became a journalist and totally involved with his hometown, Edgerton. Donna attended graduate school at Temple

University and completed her MFA in acting. Her acting years included extensive tours in places like London, England, and New York. She lived in New York City for over 20 years and eventually became a photo journalist and blogger, primarily involved with her original environmental passion for wildlife and raptors. She had lived in so many places, as she was part of an Air Force family, and had attended three different high schools. Her first two years of college were in Birmingham, Ala., then to U.W. Whitewater where she completed her undergraduate years and found a friend named Mark.

When Donna's parents retired, they moved to Milton, and as their health needs increased, Donna returned to watch over them. An amazing incident occurred in 2006 when Donna was taking photos at the Milton Art Festival of Rock River Threshere members boiling corn with a traction engine. Mark was there to cover the event for The Edgerton Reporter and recognized Donna in the crowd. Their friendship immediately renewed and they started working together on Mark's project: the book called *Edgerton*.

It was through their joint efforts that the book started to emerge. Mark

would bring ripped Piggly Wiggly bags filled with items, notes, books and ancient photos to Donna's home in Brodhead where she would scan, copy and translate Mark's notes. Mark would fall asleep on her couch with her pet parrot named Quicksilver standing on his chest, one foot tucked, sleeping as well. At that moment Donna had a great urge to throw a pencil at both of them and at least once, she did. She said "We might drive each other crazy with our individual foibles at times, his lateness drove me mad on occasion, but they were unchangeable facts and we rather liked each other as we were, if truth be known." Mark would appear at 11:00 p.m. or 1:00 a.m. with more work and food, as Donna explained, "Food was part of his bribery for my working on the book." Pizzas, sub sandwiches, pie, or red licorice would keep them going far into the nights.

Donna added that "When Mark and I were together, life's disasters such as flat tires or getting lost or losing your keys became hilarious interludes of LIFE in capital letters. We'd stand on the side of the road laughing so hard we'd double over in the ditch. We wouldn't have missed this misfortune for the world. Subterfuge, the inside joke, were our bread

and butter. We egged each other on by a look in the eye and a quirk at the corner of the mouth."

Donna knew that Mark was getting tired, but he refused to visit a doctor. He finally went to an emergency room and they gave him some useless medications that did not help him. By June, 2013, the bare bones copy was done on the book; but that is when Mark lost his life.

When Diane Everson called and told Donna of Mark's death, Donna said "It was as if the bottom had fallen out of the world." Without even thinking she added "I will finish the book." She was in complete shock.

She explained, "I felt that I had to complete the book. But it was horribly difficult to look at Mark's notes and realize that they were in his handwriting, and I knew I'd never again see his brilliant mind go into action or that hand that I had seen write volumes ever write anything again." She realized that she could not ask him for help. His photo captions were not numbered correctly and everything needed corrections. She was working long hours into exhaustion; and at the finish she said "I was relieved once the book was done and I was tired to the bone with grief, but sometimes still I catch myself staring out the kitchen window waiting for Mark to come schlepping up the driveway, with bags and bundles of surprises, shoes untied and a devilish smile in his eyes. For then I'd know today would be an unmatchable day, a day with my friend without parallel, a day filled with delight and adventure."

The book *Edgerton* was completed and printed by Arcadia Publishing. The public was invited to a Mark Scarborough book event at Newville that packed Emigail's. Brisk book sales followed in the Edgerton area, and Donna still lives in her 1850's home near the Sugar River Race in Brodhead, sadly missing her friendship with Mark.

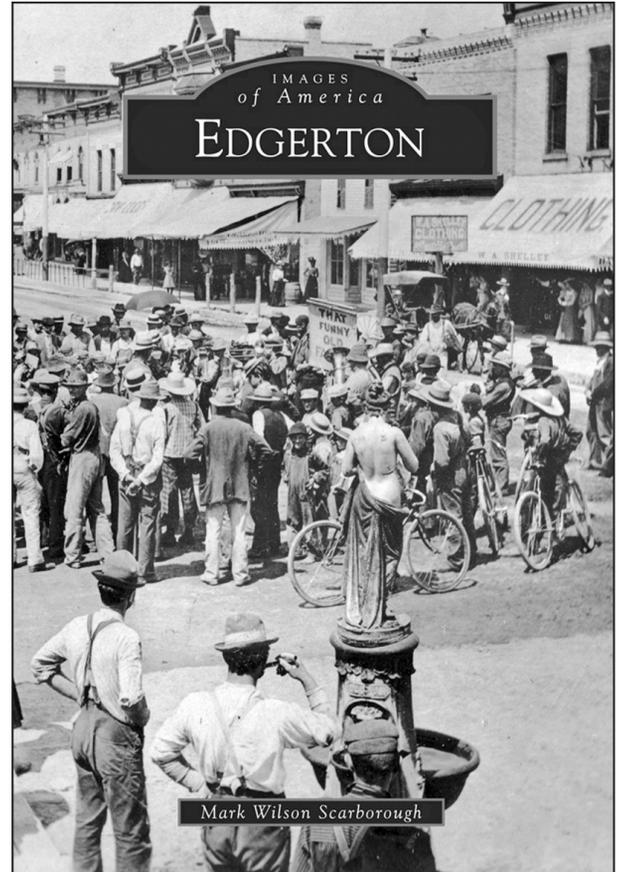
Editor's Note:

Mark started working for my parents, Harland and Helen Everson, at the Reporter when he was a junior in high school. He worked at numerous daily newspapers in his career before returning to Edgerton in 2008. He was uniquely and remarkably gifted as a community-minded journalist and historian. We dedicate this issue to him and his book.

Diane Everson, Publisher



Donna Browne and Mark Scarborough (right) with Rev. Jesse Jackson.



The cover of Mark Scarborough's book, which he wrote with Donna Browne.

The business of tobacco

Editor's note: The following was written by Frank Devine in 1977 and submitted for inclusion in the Tobacco Days issue by Tim Dickinson.

As a boy growing up on a farm near Edgerton around the turn of the century, I remember the tobacco buyers coming around starting late in the summer looking over the growing crops. Sometimes they would contract to buy for delivery the next winter and other times nothing was bought until after the tobacco was stripped. Even if you didn't know them you could always tell they were tobacco men because they all drove a team of horses on a buggy. Everyone else, even the doctor, drove a single horse buggy unless it was a family with a surrey.

Some of the buyers were independent dealers and others represented eastern tobacco companies working on a salary or commission basis. It was all the same to me and I couldn't wait to grow up so I could be one of them. These old timers included men like Andrew Jenson, John Coon, George Underhill, A.S. Flagg, Chas. Bently, T.B. Earle, Hal Childs, Scott Hatch, Weetman Dickinson, Stewart McGiffin, Irving Wentworth, Ward Wentworth, Hugh McInnis, Don McInnis, E.C. Sweeney, Hugh Sweeney, Ed Tallard, James Conway, Mal Conway, Mike Conway, Frank Kellogg, Hanson Bros., Tom Ellingson, Oscar Jenson, Fred Jenson, Andrew McIntosh, Will McIntosh, Walter Mabbett, Ed Hubbel, Wm. Brill, Nels Nelson, Chris Hoen, Ole Moen, Happy McDonough and Mike Ford. There were others whose names escape me for the moment.

The Carlton Hotel was headquarters for the tobacco men but before that was built it was the Lake House Inn on Lake Koshkonong. This was long before prohibition, and other drinking places were saloons; but at the hotel it was "The Carlton Bar." They were a close knit group of fun-loving men socially, but when it came to business they were very competitive.

Later after the automobile came into use there were others like Ed Grasman, Tom Burns, Matt Roherty, Jack Dickerson, Harry Stewart, Bill Dickinson, Frank Pyre, Clayton Hubbel, Percy Hubbel, John Moore, George Sweeney, Ed Sweeney, C.V. Sweeney, Fritz Ellingson, Harold Sutton, John Nichols, Dick Brown, Carl Heller, Bill Lane, John Flagg, and Bob McIntosh. Many of these were of my generation.

My first experience in tobacco warehouse and office work came in 1914 when my father, Dan Devine, as manager of the Farmers Whse. Co., packed tobacco for growers on a commission basis. This was in the old Mike Ford warehouse. A year or two later the Farmers Co. purchased the Wm. Brill warehouse where they are still doing business dealing in farm products. They discontinued packing tobacco when the Tobacco Pool was organized about 1921. My activity in the business ended in the early 1930's when I left the area for other employment, so I wouldn't know many who came along after that.

The only third generation tobacco family men I know of are Chas.

Sweeney and Tom Dickinson, and they both have other principal interests. Slowly changing conditions contributed to the decline of the tobacco business in Wisconsin including the introduction of the homogenized cigar binder which reduced the demand for natural leaf and acreage allotment which reduced the supply.

Tobacco people, both dealers and growers, had to be born gamblers because of the nature of the business. Between the weather and the market there are so many things that can go wrong. Fortunes can and have been made and lost almost overnight. The 1906 crop brought record prices for the growers but when the bottom dropped out of the market that winter many of the dealers went broke when they were unable to dispose of their high-priced product. The large companies as well as the salaried and commissioned men weathered it without too much trouble, but the independent dealers using their own money were hit pretty hard. Some of them never recovered from it.

The Wisconsin Tobacco Dealers and Growers Association was organized about 1922 with several hundred members from all over the state. The First Annual convention and golf tournament was held at Towne Country Club at the time. Forty years later when Tom Dickinson was president of the organization he invited all of the living original members to be guests at the 40th annual meeting at the same place. About eight or ten of us showed up. We were also invited to the 50th annual meeting at Coachman's about five years ago and I was the only original member there. As of now, I am looking forward to the 60th meeting with a lot of interest!

The first tobacco warehouses must have been built in Edgerton after the railroad came through because they all seem to be built on land leased from the railway company. This created a unique situation with warehouses on one side of the principal street and retail businesses on the other. I have never seen that

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Celebrate Edgerton's 43rd Annual Tobacco Heritage Days!



YESTERDAY



TODAY



On behalf of the Edgerton School Board and the entire Edgerton School District, I am proud to congratulate the City of Edgerton on its 43rd annual Tobacco Days celebration. Our community's heritage is rich. I look forward to seeing you this weekend.

Sincerely,
Dennis Pauli
Edgerton School District
Superintendent